

Land Evaluation Acquisition Framework

The 2016 *Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan* (Parks Plan) states that acquisition funds will be utilized for open space and park acquisition opportunities that further the goals and policies of the Parks Plan and help achieve the plan's Level of Service (LOS) standards. This evaluation framework provides an initial assessment of potential parcels considered for acquisition.

Criteria for Comparing Projects

The Parks Plan listed several criteria to be considered when determining whether to purchase properties.

- Location
- Value
- Willing Seller
- Environmental Constraints
- Recreation Value
- Habitat Value
- Contribution to Level of Service Standards or Trail Corridor
- Development Costs
- Maintenance Costs
- City Council or Community Priority

These criteria and the associated questions below provide a consistent basis for characterizing the benefits of potential acquisitions, comparing parcels, and documenting the reasons why certain parcels might be selected for additional analysis. A rating of Poor, Fair, Good or Excellent may be given for each criterion and is shown on the associated Land Evaluation Acquisition Framework matrix.

However, a single prioritization system cannot fully cover every consideration that may apply. It is anticipated that this evaluation framework will be used as an initial step and that staff will review the results, assess other applicable information as appropriate, and then determine which acquisitions will be recommended to the City Council for further consideration.

Location

The location criterion captures whether a potential acquisition meets the need for a particular park type in an area of the City. Olympia Parks Arts and Recreation Department (OPARD) considers a half mile to be within walking distance for residents to a park or open space. Considerations for this criterion include:

- Is the property located in an area where residents are not already served by a similar park or open space area?
- Does the property have a unique setting or important view?
- Would the intended park features and uses be compatible with the neighboring area or is there adequate buffer for the intended use?

- Is the property well served by public transportation or does it have good pedestrian connections?
- Does the property expand an existing park or provide an important buffer to an existing park?
- Is the property in a visible location for public safety purposes?

Value

This criterion considers the price per acre of the property and how this compares to other similar acquisitions. Cost sharing with partners and grant opportunities are also considered.

- Has the owner identified a sale price for the property or has there been an appraisal? If not, skip to the next category.
- How does the price compare to other similar acquisitions?
- How competitive is the acquisition for grant funding?

Willing Seller

Whether a property has a willing seller is a critical consideration when weighing potential acquisitions. It's also important to note that this criterion can change over time.

- The property is actively on the market. (Excellent)
- The property is not on the market, but the owner is willing to discuss selling. (Good)
- The property is not on the market, and the owner is reluctant to discuss selling. (Fair)
- The owner has no interest in selling. (Poor)
- Are there other interested buyers?

Environmental Constraints

This criterion is intended to advance properties which are not significantly impacted by known environmental constraints. However, depending on the intended park use of the property some environmental constraints may be of less concern, e.g., wetlands for an open space acquisition. Examples of environmental constraints are:

- Contaminated soil
- Extensive wetlands and/or steep slopes that make development difficult or limited
- Endangered, threatened, or priority species that are present on the site
- Stormwater management challenges
- Shoreline park development challenges

Recreation Value

Recreation value refers to the potential recreation uses that could be accommodated on a potential land acquisition. This also links closely to how an acquisition would fill an existing recreation need in the City's park system.

- Does the property have a variety of recreation opportunities?
- Are the recreation uses intended for the property an identified high need for the community?
- Would the recreation activity facilitate revenue-generating opportunities for the City or serve as an economic driver?

Habitat Value

Properties containing environmentally sensitive habitats (wetland, stream, shoreline or forest) may constrain active recreation park uses and may be more desirable for passive type parks that preserve the environmental benefits of these habitats. Both the quality and extent of the habitat on a property should be considered.

- Does the property represent biological communities and habitats that are threatened or under-protected in the region?
- Does the acquisition offer potential linkages to other important habitat features such as, wildlife corridors, waterways, etc.?

Contribution to Level of Service Standards or Trail Corridor

As discussed in the Parks Plan, the following are the target Level of Service (LOS) standards for different types of park land:

- Neighborhood Park: 1.09 acres per 1,000 residents
- Community Park: 3.00 acres per 1,000 residents
- Open Space: 11.19 acres per 1,000 residents

Additionally, significant consideration is given to properties that contribute to extension of an existing or planned trail corridor.

- Does the property help meet a current LOS deficiency?
- Will the property help meet an anticipated future LOS deficiency?
- Does the property close a gap or enhance connectivity or usability of the trail network?
- Does the property improve the usability of existing trails through support facilities such as restrooms, parking, or access points?
- Would the acquisition significantly increase the number of people within ½ mile of the park?

Development Costs

Upfront development costs associated with initial park development play a part in determining which lands to acquire.

- Is the property of sufficient size and character so as to be readily developed?
- Do the physical characteristics of the property make development difficult or expensive?
- Are frontage improvements needed?
- Are utilities already available at the property?

Maintenance Costs

The physical characteristics and location of a parcel often impact the long term, on-going maintenance needed. Particularly when comparing two potential parcels for a similar recreation use it is important to assess the acquisition from an ease of maintenance perspective.

- Is the anticipated maintenance cost associated with the intended park use comparable to that of similar park types?
- Is the location conducive to maintenance?
- What are the maintenance costs for the parcel as an undeveloped park or interim use? What are the maintenance costs for the parcel developed to its ultimate intended park use?

City Council and Community Priority

The Parks Plan is updated every six years and outlines the community's preferences and priorities for park uses, features and locations. Additionally, land acquisition opportunities may arise quickly that were previously not identified, but are nevertheless recognized as a priority by the community or City Council.

- Does the acquisition fulfill a need identified in Olympia's Comprehensive Plan or Parks Plan?
- Does the acquisition contribute to a larger, phased park project?
- Has City Council directed staff to pursue this property?
- Has there been considerable community support for this acquisition?
- Is the property's end use a high priority for Olympians?
- Is this a time sensitive opportunity?

Land Evaluation Acquisition Framework

Rating Legend: P=Poor, F=Fair, G=Good, E=Excellent

Prioritization Criteria	Candidate Sites					
	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D	Site E	Site F
Location						
Value						
Willing Seller						
Environmental Constraints						
Recreation Value						
Habitat Value						
Level of Service Standards or Trail Corridor						
Development Costs						
Maintenance Costs						
City Council & Community Priority						

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